

A5 a dispersed state in said powders-containing fiber web, said powders-containing fiber web being formed by a method other than a wet-laid method.

A6 7. (amended) A process for manufacturing a powders-affixed nonwoven fabric comprising the steps of:  
ejecting aggregates of fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4  $\mu\text{m}$  or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less, or a group of the aggregates, and/or mechanically dividable fibers capable of generating fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4  $\mu\text{m}$  or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less, or aggregates of the mechanically dividable fibers, together with powder materials, from a nozzle into a gas by an action of a compressed gas, to thereby divide the aggregates of the fine short fibers or the group thereof into the fine short fibers, and/or divide the mechanically dividable fibers or the aggregates thereof into the fine short fibers, and disperse the resulting fine short fibers and the powder materials;  
collecting the dispersed fine short fibers and the powder materials to form a powders-containing fiber web; and affixing the powder materials, while forming a nonwoven fabric from the powders-containing fiber web to obtain the powders-affixed nonwoven fabric.

→ bonding; see p. 26-27 of spec.

A7 12. (amended) A sheet material comprising at least one layer of a powders-affixed nonwoven fabric prepared from a fiber web comprising powder materials and fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4  $\mu\text{m}$  or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less in a dispersed state in said powders-containing fiber web, said powders-containing fiber web being formed by a method other than a wet-laid method.

A8 14. (amended) A process for manufacturing a sheet material comprising the steps of:

ejecting aggregates of fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4  $\mu\text{m}$  or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less, or a group of the aggregates, and/or mechanically dividable fibers capable of generating fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4  $\mu\text{m}$  or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less, or aggregates of the mechanically dividable fibers, together with powder materials, from a nozzle into a gas by an action of a compressed gas, to thereby divide the aggregates of the fine short fibers or the group thereof into the fine short fibers, and/or divide the mechanically dividable fibers or the aggregates thereof into the fine short fibers, and disperse the resulting fine short fibers and the powder materials;

collecting the dispersed fine short fibers and the powder materials to form a powders-containing fiber web; and affixing the powder materials, while forming a nonwoven fabric from the powders-

Preliminary Amendment  
Attorney Docket No. Q67578

✓  
A8 containing, and at the same time bonding a layer free of the powder materials, to obtain the sheet material containing a powders-affixed nonwoven fabric.

IN THE ABSTRACT:

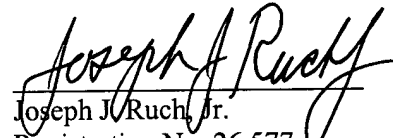
Please delete the ~~present~~ Abstract of the Disclosure and replace it with the following new Abstract of the Disclosure.

A9 Disclosed is a powders-affixed nonwoven fabric prepared from a fiber web comprising powder materials and fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4  $\mu$ m or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less in a dispersed state in the powders-containing fiber web, the powders-containing fiber web being formed by a method other than a wet-laid method. Further, a process for manufacturing the powders-affixed nonwoven fabric, and a sheet material comprising the powders-affixed nonwoven fabric are also disclosed.

REMARKS

Entry and consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Joseph J. Ruch, Jr.  
Registration No. 26,577

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC  
2100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20037-3213  
Telephone: (202) 293-7060  
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860  
JJR/amt  
Date: December 6, 2001